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S E C R E T 030902Z CITE SAIGON 3.5(c)

DIRECTOR

3 Nov 67 11 85887

3.5(c)

REFERENCE: DIRECTOR 47164

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1. SENDING INTERIM REPLY AS WILL TAKE SEVERAL DAYS TO GET RETURNS SO FAR NO INFORMATION OF "CONSOLIDATED 3.3(h)(2)
MILITIA/ GUERRILLA ORGANIZATION" OTHER THAN IV CORPS REPORTS, 3.3(h)(2)
SPECIFICALLY FROM CHUONG THIEN PROVINCE. OB NUMBERS 3.3(h)(2)
PROBLEM MORE COMPLEX EVEN THAN REFERENCE SUGGESTS.

2. SPEAK OF CONSOLIDATING HAMLET 3.3(h)(2)
AND VILLAGE GUERRILLAS BUT DO NOT MENTION MILITIA. 3.3(h)(2)
MENTIONS "PART-TIME" GUERRILLAS. A NUMBER OF REPORTS TELL
OF BREAKING GUERRILLA UNITS INTO SAPPER GROUPS AND GIVING
THEM SPECIAL TRAINING.

3. REVIEW OF SEPTEMBER PROVINCE REPORTS AND RECENT 3.3(h)(2)
DOCUMENTS (E.G. INDICATE GUERRILLA PROGRAM-- BOTH PLANS AND ORGANIZATION--
IN STATE OF FLUX THROUGHOUT COUNTRY AND APPARENTLY MOVING
DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS IN DIFFERENT PROVINCES. VILLAGE

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COMMITTEES BEING GIVEN CONTRADICTORY ORDERS TO ENCOURAGE MORE GUERRILLAS TO MOVE UP TO MAIN FORCES AND TO STRENGTHEN GUERRILLA UNITS.

4. WE ARE PROBABLY KIDDING OURSELVES IF WE THINK IN TERMS OF TWO RATHER UNIFORM AND DISPARATE CLASSES OF IRREGULARS--GUERRILLAS AND MILITIA. THE IRREGULAR STRUCTURE APPEARS TO HAVE A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF ORGANIZATIONS AND TO VARY FROM REGION TO REGION, PERHAPS FROM PROVINCE TO PROVINCE. IT IS A ROUGHLY PYRAMIDAL STRUCTURE THE BASE OF WHICH DISOLVES INTO THE MASS OF THE PEOPLE UNDER VIET CONG CONTROL IN A MANNER THAT MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE TO DRAW A SHARP LINE AND SAY THAT THOSE ON ONE SIDE ARE IRREGULARS AND THE OTHERS ARE NOT. SIMILARLY, THOUGH PERHAPS TO A LESSER EXTENT, THE EXISTENCE OF "PART-TIME GUERRILLAS" AND, POSSIBLE, FULL-TIME MILITIA MAKES THE LINE BETWEEN THESE CATEGORIES A VERY FUZZY ONE.

5. THE ATTEMPT TO ENUMERATE THE IRREGULARS WITHIN PRECISE CATEGORIES IS A SISYPHEAN TASK. THERE WILL ALWAYS BE OVERLAPS OR OMISSIONS. THIS SEEMS FAR LESS IMPORTANT THAN THE FACT THAT MACV J-2 IS STILL OFFICIALLY CARRYING THE RIDICULOUS FAGURE OF 112,760 IRREGULARS, UNCHANGED FOR

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OVER A YEAR AND A HALF. AND, IF THEY CHANGE FROM THIS TO THE FIGURE THAT WAS AGREED AT THE CONFERENCE HERE, 70,000 TO 90,000 GUERRILLAS, ALTHOUGH IT WILL BE A GREAT IMPROVEMENT, THE SPREAD IS TOO NARROW AND PROBABLY SHOULD BE RAISED CONSIDERABLY ON THE UPPER SIDE.

6. I WOULD URGE THAT INSTEAD OF STRUGGLING WITH MACV OVER WHETHER THE LINE BETWEEN GUERRILLAS AND MILITIA HAS BEEN FURTHER FUZZED AND FURTHER INACCURACY ADDED TO ALREADY DUBIOUS GUERRILLA OB FIGURES, WE OUGHT TO STRIVE TO ACHIEVE A WHOLE NEW APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF QUANTIFYING VIET CONG IRREGULAR STRENGTH. I SUGGEST THAT COMMUNIST "PEOPLES FORCES" SHOULD BE THOUGHT OF MORE IN TERMS OF EXPLOITATION OF POPULATION RESOURCES RATHER THAN IN TERMS OF CLASSICAL MILITARY OB. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE PROBLEM HANDLED IN TERMS SOMEWHAT LIKE THE PARAGRAPH WHICH FOLLOWS.

7. THE VIET CONG HAVE ACCESS TO BETWEEN 2.5 MILLION AND 3 MILLION PEOPLE IN THE TERRITORY THEY CONTROL PLUS SOME IN DISPUTED AND GVN-HELD TERRITORY. THEY CONSIDER ALL OF THEM RESOURCES TO BE USED IN WAR. A LARGE PART OF THEM ARE DIRECTLY EMPLOYED ON A SPORADIC, PART-TIME, OR FULL-TIME BASIS

Approved for Release: 2018/06/28 C05009842

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IN MILITARY AND QUASI-MILITARY ACTIVITIES. PERHAPS AS MANY AS 100,000 ARE SERVING AS FULL-TIME GUERRILLAS AND AT ANY GIVEN TIME THERE MAY BE 100,000 OR MORE OF THE OTHERS STANDING GUARD. BUILDING FORTIFICATIONS, REMOVING WOUNDED AND DEAD, PERFORMING WOGISTIC SERVICES OR OTHERWISE PARTICIPATING IN THE VC WAR EFFORT. WHAT THEY DO FOR THE VIET CONG IS LARGELY DONE BY UNIFORMED FULL-TIME TROOPS IN ALLIED FORCES, WHICH MAKES COMPARISON OF NUMBERS MISLEADING.

8. WILL REPLY BY CABLE AS SOON AS ANSWERS ARE RECIEVED FROM OUR IV CORPS REGIONAL OFFICE AND MACV OB.

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CITE DIRECTOR

SAIGON

REFS: A. SAIGON

B. SAIGON (IN 72294)

FOR

1. SEPTEMBER VC ACTIVITIES REPORT OF CHUONG THIEN PROVINCE (PARA 1, REF A) INDICATES THAT STATED THAT A COSVN DIRECTIVE OF JULY 1967 "DID AWAY" WITH VC HAMLET AND VILLAGE GUERRILLAS, AND "CONSOLIDATED A MILITIA/GUERRILLA ORGANIZATION." REPORTED ORGANIZATION APPEARS TO COMBINE GUERRILLAS AND SELF-DEFENSE MILITIA. REF A FURTHER STATES THAT "MEMBER OF VC TRA VINH PROVINCE MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE . . . VERIFIED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MILITIA/GUERRILLA UNITS." VC ACTIVITIES SEPTEMBER REPORT OF IV CORPS (REF B, PARA 2), COMMENTED THAT "VC APPEAR TO BE TRYING TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR LOW-LEVEL UNITS."

2. BECAUSE OF IMMINENT DROPPING FROM MACV OB OF VC SELF-DEFENSE ELEMENTS (ONE OF THE TWO APPARENT COMPONENTS OF CONSOLI-

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DATED "MILITIA/GUERRILLA" UNITS). THESE REPORTS RAISE POTENTIALLY STICKY BUT FUNDAMENTAL ORDER OF BATTLE ACCOUNTING PROBLEM. FOR EXAMPLE, HOW WOULD ONE COPE WITH FUTURE REPORT OR DOCUMENT LISTING 10,000 "MILITIA/GUERRILLAS" FROM PROVINCE X? SHOULD THE ENTIRE 10,000 BE EXCLUDED FROM THE OB, OR ALL OF THEM INCLUDED, OR SHOULD ONE MAKE AN ARBITRARY DECISION TO INCLUDE SOME OF THEM AND NOT OTHERS. THE LAST COURSE WOULD RAISE VERY DIFFICULT AND POTENTIALLY CONTROVERSIAL PROBLEMS REGARDING CRITERIA.

3. BECAUSE THIS PROBLEM COULD DIRECTLY AFFECT WHOLE OB PICTURE, REQUEST YOU TAKE FOLLOWING STEPS:

A. DETERMINE STATE OF EVIDENCE CONCERNING SO-CALLED "MILITIA/GUERRILLA" UNITS (WHETHER, FOR EXAMPLE, SUCH EVIDENCE IS CONFINED TO IV CORPS CAS REPORTS).

B. INFORM CHIEF OF MACV OB BRANCH OF THE POTENTIAL ACCOUNTING PROBLEM (WHICH HE MAY WELL BE AWARE OF).

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PAGE THREE

C. CABLE REPLY AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE, GIVING RUNDOWN OF ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE, OR LACK OF IT, ON "MILITIA/GUERRILLA UNITS." MACV J-2 COMMENTS, AND YOUR OWN OBSERVATIONS.

END OF MESSAGE

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4. FYI. REPORT OF POSSIBLE CONSOLIDATION IS TOUCHED ON IN LATEST DRAFT OF NIE 14.3, BUT NO CHANGES ARE PLANNED IN NIE STRENGTH FIGURES.

E/OCI ✓ [redacted]

D/ONE ✓ [redacted] 3.5(c)

D/OER [redacted] 3.5(c)

C/VNO ✓ [redacted] 3.5(c)

William E. Colby, C/FE
RELEASING OFFICER

COORDINATING OFFICERS

George A. Carver
SAVA
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